

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 17, 2004. Claims 1, 3, 5, 12, 14, 16, 23, 25, and 27 are pending in this application. None of the claims have been amended in this Response. Claims 1, 12, and 23 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 3, 12, 14, 23, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,563,535 B1 (Anderson) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,043,816 (Nakano et al.); and rejected Claims 5, 16, and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson in view of Nakano et al. and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,764,800 (Yamagata). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants note that Anderson has an effective filing date of May 19, 1998, which is later than Japanese application no. 9-179566, filed on July 4, 1997, from which this case claims priority. Applicants note that the sworn translation of priority document no. 9-179566 is being prepared and will be submitted to the Office shortly, at which time Applicants will request removal of the Anderson reference as a cited prior art reference, and allowance of the present case.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and the allowance of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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